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12 **UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT**
13 **DISTRICT OF NEVADA**

14 In re:

15 USA COMMERCIAL MORTGAGE
16 COMPANY,

17 Debtor.

18 Case No. BK-S-06-10725-LBR

19 Chapter 11

20 **SIXTH OMNIBUS OBJECTION OF
21 USACM TRUST TO PROOFS OF
22 CLAIM BASED IN WHOLE OR IN
23 PART UPON INVESTMENT IN THE
24 TAPIA RANCH LOAN**

25 **Date of Hearing: July 26, 2011**
26 **Time of Hearing: 1:30 p.m.**
27 **Estimated Time for hearing: 10 min.**

28 The USACM Liquidating Trust (the “USACM Trust”) moves this Court, pursuant
29 to § 502 of title 11 of the United States Bankruptcy Code (the “Bankruptcy Code”) and
30 Rule 3007 of the Federal Rules of Bankruptcy Procedure (the “Bankruptcy Rules”), for an
31 order disallowing in whole or in part the Proofs of Claim listed in **Exhibit A**. These
32 claims were filed by investors (“Direct Lenders”) against USA Commercial Mortgage
33 Company (“USACM”) based in whole or in part upon an investment in a loan to Castaic
34 Partners, LLC (the “Borrower”). This loan was sometimes referred to as the “Tapia Ranch
35 Loan” and that is how the USACM Trust will refer to it here. This Objection is supported
36 by the Court’s record and the Declarations of Geoffrey L. Berman and Edward M. Burr in
37 Support of Omnibus Objections to Proofs of Claim Based Upon the Investment in the
38 Tapia Ranch Loan. (the “Berman Decl.” and “Burr Decl.”).

1 THIS OBJECTION DOES NOT RELATE TO AND WILL NOT IMPACT THE
2 DIRECT LENDERS' RIGHTS TO REPAYMENT ON THE TAPIA RANCH LOAN,
3 SHARE IN ANY PROCEEDS GENERATED FROM THE SALE OF THE REAL
4 PROPERTY SECURING THE TAPIA RANCH LOAN OR SHARE IN THE
5 RECOVERY OF ANY FUNDS FROM THE GUARANTOR FOR THE LOAN.

6 **MEMORANDUM OF POINTS AND AUTHORITIES**

7 **I. BACKGROUND FACTS**

8 **a. The USACM Bankruptcy**

9 On April 13, 2006 ("Petition Date"), USACM filed a voluntary petition for relief
10 under chapter 11 of the Bankruptcy Code. Debtor continued to operate its business as
11 debtor-in-possession pursuant to sections 1107(a) and 1108 of the Bankruptcy Code.
12 Debtor's post-petition management of the Debtor was under the direction of Thomas J.
13 Allison of Mesirow Financial Interim Management, LLC, who served as the Chief
14 Restructuring Officer.

15 USACM was a Nevada corporation that, prior to the Petition Date, was in the
16 business of underwriting, originating, brokering, funding and servicing commercial loans
17 primarily secured by real estate, both on behalf of investors and for its own account. That
18 business included the solicitation of investors to purchase fractional interest in loans that
19 USACM originated and then serviced. These investors are referred to as "Direct Lenders"
20 in USACM's bankruptcy case and in this Objection.

21 On January 8, 2007, this Court entered its Order Confirming the "Debtors' Third
22 Amended Joint Chapter 11 Plan of Reorganization" as Modified Herein [Docket No.
23 2376]. As part of the Plan, and pursuant to an Asset Purchase Agreement filed with this
24 Court, USACM sold the servicing rights to most of the loans it serviced to Compass
25 Partners, LLC and Compass Financial Partners, LLC ("Compass"), including the Tapia
26 Ranch Loan. The sale to Compass closed on February 16, 2007.

1 The USACM Trust exists as of the Effective Date of the Plan, which was March 12,
2 2007. Geoffrey L. Berman is the Trustee. Under the Plan, the USACM Trust is the
3 successor to USACM with respect to standing to seek allowance and disallowance of
4 Claims under 11 U.S.C. § 502(a).

5 Upon information derived from filings in the United States District Court, District
6 of Nevada, *3685 San Fernando Lenders Company, LLC, et al v. Compass USA SPE, LLC,*
7 *et al*, No. 2:07-cv-00892-RCJ-GWF action, the Trust believes that “Silar Advisors, LP
8 (“Silar”) financed Compass’ acquisition of the Purchased Assets, including the loan
9 service agreements in the USACM bankruptcy case and took a secured interest in those
10 Purchased Assets by executing a Master Repurchase Agreement (“Repurchase
11 Agreement”) with Compass, and by filing a UCC-1 financing statement with the State of
12 Delaware.” *Id.* Docket 1250 at 13-14 (citations to declarations omitted).

13 Further, from filings in the same action, the Trust believes that “Effective as of
14 September 26, 2007, Silar foreclosed on Compass through Asset Resolution LLC (“Asset
15 Resolution”) and took ownership of the Purchased Assets. ... Silar created Asset
16 Resolution as a ‘single purpose entity,’ conveyed all of its interests in the Repurchase
17 Agreement to Asset Resolution, and Asset Resolution properly foreclosed on the assets of
18 Compass, including the Purchased Assets.” (Citations omitted.) Asset Resolution LLC is
19 now a debtor in a chapter 7 bankruptcy case pending in Nevada, case no. BK-S-09-32824-
20 RCJ, along with certain affiliates.¹ By Order entered on July 19, 2010 by the Hon. Robert
21 C. Jones in the Asset Resolution Case, the servicing rights for 19 loans were transferred to
22 Cross, FLS. The Tapia Ranch Loan, was among the loans whose servicing rights were
23 transferred to Cross, FLS.

24
25

¹ 10 90 SPE LLC, Fiesta Stoneridge LLC, CFP Gramercy SPE LLC, Bundy 2.5 Million SPE LLC, CFP
26 Cornman Toltec SPE LLC, Bundy Five Million LLC, Fox Hills SPE LLC, HFAH Monaco SPE LLC,
Huntsville SPE LLC, Lake Helen Partners SPE LLC, Ocean Atlantic SPE LLC, CFP, Gess SPE LLC, CFP
Tapia Ranch SPE LLC, and Shamrock SPE LLC.

1 The Trust has attempted to monitor loan collections through monitoring the district
2 court litigation and the ARC bankruptcy case, but has received limited information
3 concerning servicing and resolution of direct loans by Compass/Silar/Asset Resolution or
4 their successors, including the trustee in bankruptcy for Asset Resolution. The Trust has
5 also attempted to contact Cross FLS about certain loans that it is servicing, including the
6 Tapia Ranch Loan. The following is the extent of the USACM Trust's information on the
7 current servicing and status of the Tapia Ranch Loan.

8 **b. The Tapia Ranch Loan**

9 USACM circulated an Offer Sheet to prospective Direct Lenders soliciting funding
10 for an acquisition and development loan to a borrower identified as "Castaic Partners,
11 LLC." A copy of the Offer Sheet is attached hereto as **Exhibit B** and incorporated by this
12 reference. (Berman Decl., ¶ 4.) The total loan amount proposed was \$22,000,000. The
13 Offer Sheet described the investment as a "First Trust Deed Investment" and noted that the
14 investment would be secured by a first deed of trust on approximately 834 acres of
15 property in the hillside of Castaic, in Los Angeles, California. The Circular further
16 provides a loan to value percentage of 73%, based on a sale agreement with Toll Brothers
17 in December 2003.² The Circular stated that an appraisal was in process.

18 Pursuant to the Loan Agreement, the loan was intended to acquire the subject
19 property, including the purchase of third party options to acquire the property. (Berman
20 Decl., ¶ 5.)

21 On September 28, 2004, Borrower made and delivered to various lenders, including
22 the Direct Lenders identified in **Exhibit A**, a "Promissory Note Secured by Deed of Trust"
23 (the "Note") and a Loan Agreement. (Berman Decl., ¶ 6.) The Note and Loan

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25 ² Counsel for the Trust has been unable to locate a copy of the referenced purchase agreement in the
26 USACM documents and files that are available for review. There were three Castaic Partners loans for the
Tapia Ranch development. It appears that each covered a different section of the development. The
Circulars all mention a different sale agreement with Toll Brothers, presumably one for each section of
development.

1 Agreement provided for a loan of \$18,500,000, with potential subsequent increases up to
2 \$22,000,000. The Note was secured by a “Deed of Trust, Assignment of Rents, Security
3 Agreement and Fixture Filing” from the Borrower in favor of the Direct Lenders that was
4 recorded in the official records of Los Angeles County, California on October 8, 2004 at
5 Instrument Number 042598922, as were subsequent amendments to the Deed of Trust to
6 secure subsequent advances. The Note was also supported by an Unconditional Guaranty
7 executed by William Barkett on September 28, 2004. The USACM “Loan Summary”
8 dated July 31, 2006 and filed in this case shows that Borrower was “Non-performing” on
9 the Note as of July 31, 2006. (Berman Decl., ¶ 6.) During this bankruptcy case through
10 the transfer of servicing to Compass, USACM treated the Direct Lenders with respect to
11 any interim payments by the borrower in accordance with this Court’s orders.

12 Counsel for the Trustee had a brief conversation with a representative of Cross,
13 FLS regarding the status of the Tapia Ranch Loan. According to Cross, FLS, the Direct
14 Lenders continue to have an interest in the collateral through a joint venture they entered
15 into with Mr. Howard Justice, a Direct Lender himself. The Direct Lenders are
16 attempting to negotiate down the unpaid property taxes that have accrued on the property,
17 in order to foreclose on, and then sell, the collateral.

18 **c. The Tapia Ranch Claims**

19 **Exhibit A**, attached, lists Proofs of Claim filed by Direct Lenders that appear to be
20 based in whole in part upon an investment in the Tapia Ranch Loan. (Burr Decl. ¶ 7.)
21 **Exhibit A** identifies the Proof of Claim number, the claimant, the claimant’s address, the
22 total amount of the claim and the total amount of the claim that appears to be related to an
23 investment in the Tapia Ranch Loan based upon the information provided by the
24 claimant. (Burr Declaration ¶ 7.) The claims listed in **Exhibit A** are referred to
25 hereafter as the “Tapia Ranch Claims.” As required by Nevada LR 3007, a copy of the
26

1 first page of the proof of claim for each of the claims referenced in **Exhibit A** are attached
2 as **Exhibit C**.

3 **II. JURISDICTION**

4 The Court has jurisdiction over this Objection pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1334 and
5 157. Venue is appropriate under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1408 and 1409. This matter is a core
6 proceeding under 28 U.S.C. § 502 and Bankruptcy Rule 3007.

7 The statutory predicates for the relief requested herein are 11 U.S.C. § 502 and
8 Bankruptcy Rule 3007.

9 **III. APPLICABLE AUTHORITY**

10 Under the Bankruptcy Code, any Claim for which a proof of claim has been filed
11 will be allowed unless a party in interest objects. If a party in interest objects to the proof
12 of claim, the Court, after notice and hearing, shall determine the amount of the Claim and
13 shall allow the Claim except to the extent that the Claim is “unenforceable against the
14 debtor . . . under any . . . applicable law for a reason other than because such claim is
15 contingent or unmatured.” 11 U.S.C. § 502(b). A properly filed proof of claim is
16 presumed valid under Bankruptcy Rule 3001(f). However, once an objection to the proof
17 of claim controverts the presumption, the creditor ultimately bears the burden of
18 persuasion as to the validity and amount of the claim. *See Ashford v. Consolidated*
19 *Pioneer Mortg. (In re Consolidated Pioneer Mortg.)*, 178 B.R. 222, 226 (9th Cir. B.A.P.
20 1995), *aff'd*, 91 F.3d 151 (9th Cir. 1996).

21 **IV. THE OBJECTION**

22 The Tapia Ranch Loan appears to have been a legitimate, arms-length transaction
23 with a third party borrower. In addition, the Direct Lenders took a known risk by
24 investing in a promissory note secured by a lien on real property.

25 USACM is not liable for the Borrower's default or any decrease in the value of the
26 collateral.

1 The Direct Lenders fail to state a claim because USACM does not appear to have
2 breached the loan servicing agreements with respect to collection of the Tapia Ranch
3 Loan. USACM was under no duty to foreclose on the collateral securing the Tapia Ranch
4 Loan or take any other action.

5 This objection will not affect the Direct Lenders' right to be repaid on the Tapia
6 Ranch Loan by the Borrower or to recover from the sale of any collateral that secured the
7 Tapia Ranch Loan or on the guarantee supporting the Tapia Ranch Loan.

8 **V. CONCLUSION**

9 The USACM Trust respectfully requests that the Court disallow the claims against
10 USACM listed in Exhibit A in whole in part to the extent those claims are based upon an
11 investment in the Tapia Ranch Loan. This objection concerns only claims based upon an
12 investment in the Tapia Ranch Loan and not any other claims of any of the Direct Lenders.
13 The USACM Trust also requests such other and further relief as is just and proper.

14 Dated: June 22, 2011.

15 LEWIS AND ROCA LLP

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24 Copy of the foregoing and pertinent
25 portion of Exhibits mailed by first
26 class postage prepaid U.S. Mail on
27 June 22, 2011 to all parties listed on
28 Exhibit A attached.

29 LEWIS AND ROCA LLP

30 s/ Matt Burns
31 Matt Burns